

Planning for the Future of State Lands Stewardship

DNR is charged with managing state lands to provide benefits for today's citizens and for generations to come.

Sustainable Forestry

At least every 10 years, DNR must recalculate the sustainable harvest level – the amount of timber that can be harvested from state trust forests in the coming decade without compromising the health of the forests and the benefits they generate for current and future generations.

During 2002, DNR began a two-year process to examine the 10-year sustainable harvest calculation, including dozens of meetings with the public and interested parties. The new calculation will help guide DNR in managing Western Washington state forests for the financial support of schools, universities, counties and local taxing districts while providing a mosaic of habitat for wildlife.

DNR is using a new spatial computer model which not only calculates allowable level of harvest, but also maps habitat across landscapes and provides the most comprehensive look ever at the management of state trust forests. The model looks at state forests over not just the next ten years, but the next 200 years, incorporating the effects of different policy guidelines and tree growth. The

model will provide decision-makers and the public with extensive information on the important balance between working landscapes, healthy ecosystems and benefits for the people of Washington.

In November of 2002, the Board of Natural Resources selected seven calculation alternatives to examine as part of a detailed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The draft EIS is expected to be complete toward the middle of 2003, and will examine economic, environmental and social benefits of each alternative.

Upon completion, the draft will be distributed to the public for review and comment. To ensure the widest possible discussion of the alternatives, Commissioner Sutherland and the Board decided not to choose a "preferred alternative" at this time.

The final decision is scheduled to be reached in the Fall of 2003.

For more information and updates about DNR's sustainable forestry check the site map/index on our web page: www.dnr.wa.gov

Photo: Mt. Pilchuck rises behind a stand of second-growth forest at the edge of a recently harvested area. Over time, harvests will result in a mosaic of stands of different ages across the landscape. The ages of trees at harvest and the types of harvest are among the factors considered in the sustainable harvest calculation.



D. PUGMIRE / DNR

Legacy Trust

Each year DNR-managed state uplands welcome more than 9 million hikers, hunters, trail riders and campers. Across Washington, these lands provide more than 1,000 miles of trails, 143 recreation sites and a variety of unique landscapes that offer opportunities for day trips or overnight visits.

Education and scientific research are also encouraged on thousands of acres of DNR-managed natural areas.

Increasingly, however, visitors face safety risks related to overuse, overcrowding, and criminal activity on state lands, including garbage dumping, vandalism and drug labs. Habitat for rare plants and for birds, fish, and other wildlife is being damaged, or lost to non-native species.

Providing safe recreational opportunities and protecting habitat requires constant and ongoing management. With growing pressures on limited state funding, fewer and fewer dollars are available for repairs, maintenance and enforcement.

In 2002, Commissioner Doug Sutherland proposed a new approach to funding these important parts of DNR's mission: the Legacy Trust for Recreation and Conservation. The idea is to support public use of managed lands by managing lands. With legislative approval, the new trust would acquire forestland and other assets, which would be managed to generate a consistent and sustainable stream of new

revenue for stewardship of natural areas, maintenance of trails and campgrounds, and improved law enforcement and safety on DNR-managed lands through leases and responsible timber harvests.

The trust would benefit from DNR's expertise in managing lands to some of the highest environmental standards in North America, and the revenue generated through timber harvests as well as agricultural and commercial leases would reduce the year-to-year pressure on the state General Fund budget and would help keep state lands open and safe for millions of visitors each year.

Commissioner Sutherland has proposed that the trust would make payments in lieu of property taxes for the new trust lands, to ease the burden on those counties who already contain large amounts of non-taxed public land.

During 2002, DNR and Commissioner Sutherland outlined the idea of the Legacy Trust for Recreation and Conservation at public meetings. During 2003, DNR will work with the public and the Legislature to craft this new trust, and hopes to find initial funding for the program (public, private or a combination), and begin to assemble appropriate parcels.

For more information about the Legacy Trust and to provide thoughts or comments, visit DNR's web page at: www.dnr.wa.gov



DNR

Photo: Facilities like this bridge in the Tahuya State Forest need to be regularly maintained to protect both user safety and the health of the natural resources that draw millions of people to visit state lands each year.